

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 09850 845 8

N^o 4009.230



JUL -6

1. AUG 31

SIAN 11

K FEB 18

2009. 230

Jeffery

Jeffery

[illegible]

9183

Nov. 28. 1898.
9.

YASUJIRU

217 70

NOV 28 1898

THE GROUND.

A good game of Croquet may be played upon any fair sized ground ; but if the ground chosen be too small, that is to say less than 20yds. by 15yds., the various strokes become so easy as to destroy nearly all the interest which would otherwise be taken in the game. The proper size for a Croquet-ground is 40yds. long and 30yds. wide. The boundaries should be distinctly marked, either by wire netting, or perpendicular supports, by tapes, or cords securely fastened and stretched, or by some other method designed by the ground-maker. In laying out the ground for a Croquet-lawn, the same rules will apply as for that of lawn tennis. In the first place select the piece of ground, and let it be borne in mind that it should, if possible, be upon a dead level. Having chosen the plot, the next thing to do is to see that it is properly drained. For this purpose, procure some ordinary pipes which are generally used for the purpose, and place them in rows, about 15ft. apart, and 2ft. or 3ft. below the surface of the soil.

I am presuming that the occupier, or owner of the land, has had the subject of the lawn upon his mind for some time previously, and that he has determined to commence the necessary work in the Autumn, in order to have all matters in readiness by the following Summer. Pipe-draining will, of course, only be necessary where the soils are of the moist order, so that on a dry soil little if any

INTRODUCTION.

CROQUET has been described as a game in which wooden mallets drive wooden balls through iron hoops, in a certain order. We imagine that the promoter of the above definition was not an ardent admirer of the home game, and that his practices were cut short immediately after he had framed his now never-to-be-forgotten dictum. To him, possibly, there could be no such phrases as "science" and "tactics" in connection with the game, and we must therefore regard him as one of those whose inclination led him to a certain distance only, and that when he put his hand to the mallet, he regretted the action, and turned back. There are numerous difficulties which the tyro has to combat, as knowledge of strength, direction of stroke; but as soon as the hum-drum of the "rudimans," as Timothy Oldmixon called them, is passed, then the game begins to assume a new aspect, and matters become finally as smooth as the lawn upon which the game is played. After he has mastered one or two of the strokes, the next thing for him to do is to study the rules.

notice may be taken of the pipe system. But where the pipes are not used, care must be taken that the ground should be spudded to the depth of at least a foot, and then accurately levelled. It should then be allowed to rest for a time, after all the stones have been taken out.

It may be found that, at various points, the ground has sunk a trifle. When such is the case loosen the top soil in the dip, or dips, and fill up the defective part with some soil of the same kind as that which is to compose the ground. After some time weeds will be observed in various parts of the marked out space. These should be carefully removed, with all the roots, or they will very soon re-appear. About November, before the frosts begin, the turf may be put on, and lightly pressed down. It may then be left until the following spring, when work should commence in earnest. Let a heap of fine sifted soil be placed upon the turf. Then, with a shovel, convey a certain quantity, and carefully fill up all the little spaces that are left between the turfs which may not have properly joined. However carefully the turf may have been laid, small openings will always be discovered which will require filling. Worm casts will also be found in great quantities up to March. These should be carefully scattered, not swept up, by the aid of a long birch-broom in dry weather. When this has been done a light roller may be put on the ground, and worked all over the space rather slowly. To prevent the worms working underneath

to any great extent, sometimes a layer of ashes is placed just under the top crust. Worms do not like an ashen soil, and will seek other parts of the garden, where they have not been placed. As soon as the grass begins to grow, weeds, especially daisies, should be looked after. There are various methods of getting rid of these pests. The best course to pursue is to procure a large tin of Lawn Sand, which may be obtained from Messrs. Barr & Sons, King Street, Covent Garden. Then upon some quiet dry day in spring, give the grass, especially the daisies, a good dressing with the sand. It will have a most marvellous effect. The daisies will in a few days completely disappear, while the grass, upon which the sand acts as a manure, will assume a beautiful green tint. Another plan, when the daisies are not so plentiful, is to string them. Get two strings the width of the ground, and peg them down across the lawn. Then work the whole distance between the lines, until every daisy has been removed by the knife—then take the first string, and move it over the other, repeating the operation until the whole surface has been gone over. This has the effect of leaving small brown patches where the daisies have been removed. If the marks are very evident, and holes are made, fill in with a little loose fine soil, brushing it well into the hollows. When solitary daisies are taken out, the ball of the foot should be placed upon the spot, and a sharp turn be given to it. This has the effect of spreading the roots of the grass, and will cause the space

to be filled up quicker. Where dandelions appear, a dressing of the Lawn Sand may be given, when the dandelion will soon be destroyed.

In cases where the lawn has to be sown, only the finest grass seeds should be used. These may be procured at Barr & Son's, Carter's, Sutton's and other well known growers.

To keep a ground in good order, frequent mowing should be resorted to, using a hood to the machine. If this is not done, the fragments of grass remain upon the turf, clog the balls in damp weather, and so prevent them running. If a hood is not used, care should be taken to have the turf properly swept. If the lawn is not likely to be used for a considerable time, then the cut grass may be left, to help the undergrowth, as manure. The knives of the machine should be set very low, so as to cut the grass as near to the surface as possible, in order that the balls may not be impeded during the play.

A good roller is a necessity for a Croquet-lawn. It should be used first in the early spring, and continually through the season. The roller should not be a heavy one, nor should it be narrow, from edge to edge, or it may cut the turf ; but it must be sufficiently broad to cover a fair width of grass. Some rollers have their edges rounded, so as not to cut the soil. Others may be constructed so as to hold ballast or water ; but a roller of medium weight, frequently applied, fulfils all the necessary requirements.

Worm casts should not be taken from the turf, for

without our friends, the worms, we should have no top-soil ; but they should be harrowed or brushed with the long besom, until they form part and parcel of the lawn. Inequalities will always appear, and though the eye may not discern them, the heavy ball will be sure to find them out. The nuisance of the worm-cast must therefore be met in a business-like manner, and scattered, but not removed. To make a bush-harrow, cut some close bushes and fasten them to a hurdle, harness a donkey to it and draw it briskly up and down the ground. Never roll the casts until they are scattered, or lumps will speedily form. Should it be necessary to destroy the worms, a chemically prepared fluid can be procured, a weak solution of lime and water, or salt and water, might be found to be efficacious.

Weeds may be taken out by the knife, or by the aid of a drop of nitric-acid, or better still, by using the Lawn Sand.

Inequalities will occasionally appear in the turf. During the Autumn or early Spring, the grass may be taken up and some fresh soil added ; but during the Summer season, if the depression be small, the pronged fork may be used to advantage. Dig the points well into the ground, and press the handle back until the centre of the depression is raised ; then pass the roller slowly over the hill raised, and allow it to rest. Should it subside, raise the soil again as before.

According to the situation of a Croquet-ground it may

be necessary to surround it with an embankment. This, of course, can be done. It may also be well to notice that lawns require frequent dressings. By frequent dressings I do not mean continual applications of soil. Dressing, I take it, includes all those attentions which a good lawn requires. Every year a top-dressing should be placed upon it. The spring is the best time to do this. The first dressing should consist of fine sifted earth, or sand. When the soil has been put on, it should be levelled accurately. The usual way of doing this is to drag a heavy plank along the whole ground. By so doing all the inequalities are filled up, as the plank passes over them. The soil should then be left in repose, until after the first rain, when leaf-mould should be the second dressing, mixed with guana, or some other description of manure. When this is well washed in, sweep, bush-harrow, roll, and mow as the grass grows. Weeding should constantly be attended to.

THE ALPHABET OF THE GAME.

Point. A point is scored when the hoop is made, or a peg is struck in the order of play.

Hoop, or Peg, in order, is the stroke (point) that had to be made next.

To Roquet. To strike with the striker's ball another ball, for the first time, either in the turn, or after making the point.

Croquet is taken by the player placing his ball in contact with the ball roqueted, and then hitting it with the mallet.

The **Striker's** ball is "in hand" when it has roqueted another ball, and continues to be so until croquet has been taken, when it is again in play.

The **Striker** is the player whose turn it is to play.

Dead Ball. The opponent's ball, which has just been played.

Object-Ball. The ball at which you aim your own, in the roquet, or off which you take croquet.

Turn. Playing a ball in its proper order.

Break. The number of points made in a turn.

Rover is a ball that has made the necessary points in order, with the exception of the winning peg.

Rush. A shot played with such strength as to place it at some distance.

Dead Boundary. A law by which the player loses the remainder of his turn.

Long Shot. A long distance roquet.

Finessing is to play a ball into a corner, or out of the way of an adversary—say to the boundary.

Out and In. The player who has the command of the balls is said to be “in,” while the opponent, who has the “long shots,” is “out.”

A **Bisque** is an additional stroke, giving the player another turn.

A **Boundary Ball** is one which has been played to a corner, or other spot, three feet from the boundary.

Wiring is when a ball is so placed that a hoop or peg is between it and another ball.

Blocked. A player is blocked, when another ball is in its way.

Foul Strokes are those which transgress any of the rules of the game.

To lie up to a hoop or ball is when the striker has finished his turn, and endeavours to help his partner by placing his ball near that partner's hoop, or ball.

To **Shoot** is to aim at a ball, or balls, in an endeavour to roquet one of them.

The **Tice** is to tempt an adversary to “shoot.”

To **Peel** a ball is a following stroke by which the striker's ball goes through the hoop with that of the opponent.

IMPLEMENTS USED IN THE GAME.

1, Hoops. These are known by different names, such as—arches, rings, or wires. They are made of round iron, and should be painted a French grey, and should stand 12in. above the ground. In width (inside measurement) the maximum is $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. for ladies' games, and 4in. for gentlemen's. The entire length of the hoops should be 15in., to allow of 3in. being driven into the ground. To prevent the spreading of the hoops, from frequent blows, a stay is fixed across the best kinds, near the foot, so that when the hoop is driven into the ground the stay is also driven close down, so as not to impede the ball in its course. In preference to iron, steel is sometimes used, the legs of the hoop being fixed into holes drilled into blocks of wood. Another kind of leg fastening is the block of wood sunk beneath the surface, into which the legs easily slide. The wood is a fixture, but the hoop can be removed at will. The hoops may be coloured according to the fancy of the players; some prefer white, or blue, while others give the preference to darker colours. For championship meetings the width of the hoops is $3\frac{3}{4}$ in.

2, Balls. These are generally made of beech or box-wood and are $3\frac{5}{8}$ in. in diameter. In weight they are 14oz. Box-wood is the best material out of which to make them, as the wood is heavy, and it is less likely to lose its shape, for even circular balls, if left out in the wet, will lose their

shape and acquire bias. There are several ways of colouring the balls ; but the distinguishing method is to make them blue, red, black, and yellow, the first and third being partners against the second and fourth. Where more balls are required, other distinguishing colours are used, or the same four, with a ring round. Experimentalists will, eventually, it is to be hoped, provide us with some better material even than box-wood for the manufacture of croquet balls, for that kind of wood is exceedingly brittle, and a hard blow will frequently cause the ball to split, or chip. They should always be stored in a dry place, and wiped before being put away in wet weather.

3, Mallets. As a rule each player will much prefer to use his own mallet, just as a batsman uses his own cricket-bat ; but it is always advisable to have a certain number on the ground, from which a player may make a selection. Mallets of the same weight will not suit all players, nor will mallets of the same length of handle. Each player, therefore, who really intends to go in for croquet, should select one for himself, and take as much care of it as a cricketer does of his bat. A mallet ought to weigh from $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs to 3 lbs. 2 oz. Mallets of these weights have been found to be a great improvement in striking the heavy box-wood balls, which with a light mallet would sometimes jar the hand, especially in the case of those humanely provided for ladies, or a sharp blow would cause the mallet to twist round in the hand. Great improvements have, however, been made

in regard to the slipping ; handles having been made of an octagonal form, so as to insure a good and firm grasp. Another kind of mallet that is fast gaining popularity is the flat bottomed, or sliced mallet, on the bottom of which a metal plate is screwed. This plan is found to give weight and steadiness to the various strokes in the game.

4, Clips. These are painted the same colour as the various balls, with which they are meant to correspond. When in use they are fixed upon the hoop or peg, which is the next in order for the ball of the same colour. Their use is to remind the player of his stage of progress in the game, and to prevent disputes which might otherwise arise through forgetfulness.

5, Pegs. These should be made of wood, of an elastic kind, *i.e.*, wood that will bend without breaking. They should be $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter, be about 2ft. out of the ground, and should be painted white. An exception should, however, be made in the colouring of the rings round the top, which should be painted blue, red, black and yellow ; the order of the balls. A cross-bar is fixed on the top of the turning-peg to hold the clips.

In all cases it will be advisable for those who intend to purchase goods connected with Croquet to seek out an old established firm, one that has not only been before the public for a considerable number of years, but a firm whose wares have become so seasoned by being kept, in the raw wood, in a storage necessary for the seasoning process.

Mr. Ayres, of 111, Aldersgate Street, is a man whose name is known all over the globe, and his stock of goods is such as obliges him to keep a vast amount or quantity of timber constantly on hand. Naturally, all the wood that he uses becomes thoroughly seasoned and fit to be cut up when ordered by the officials in connection with the firm. Mr. Ayres is always on the look out for any new invention that may assist perfecting the numerous out-door games played by the public for whom he caters. In connection with Croquet, I would mention his flat-bottomed **Mallets**, with brass plates—those with India-rubber ends—the **Balls** chequered, or diced (painted) so that the colouring will not easily wear off. His new Croquet arches are also worthy of attention. They are constructed in such a manner that when once driven into the ground they cannot sink lower, on account of the stay which is placed to prevent it. This stay in no way interferes with the passage of the balls. Altogether, a visit to Mr. Ayres' manufactory will repay the would-be purchaser of Croquet sets. Another well-known caterer for public favour in Croquet sets is Mr. Feltham, of 54 and 55, Aldersgate Street, whose goods are of the first-class order. His hoops are warranted never to get out of the perpendicular. His rubber-faced heads are in constant demand, and one of the peculiar features of the garden-set is that when the outer lid is opened it forms a very handsome and commodious seat for hall or garden. Other sets of note

are the St. James,' Climax, and the Victorian. Mr. Feltham's premises are very extensive ones, while the manufactory near Victoria Station is on a very large scale, to suit the requirements of his numerous clients.

Strokes. We will suppose that the tyro has all things in readiness for his preliminary practice. His ground has been completed, and is in good order, while his croquet-set, not forgetting his mallet, suits him down to the ground. The mallet should be grasped by both hands, and swung in a direction from hip to shoulder and shoulder to hip. To use one hand only is to provoke unsteadiness in the stroke, and to be unsteady is to court defeat. The ball must be directly in front of the feet of the striker. The feet should be slightly parted, with the extreme line of the toes parallel with the straight line, supposed to be drawn from the right to the left shoulder. This position is absolutely necessary, for if one foot be only slightly in advance of the other the ball will, when struck, take an erratic course, and one certainly not intended by the striker. The ball should, also, be just so far away from the toes as to allow the mallet to reach it, and strike it fairly in the centre, without touching the ground. Keep the knees straight, without stiffness, and swing the mallet with regularity, taking care that no finger extends along the handle. By so doing a regular sweep can be made without the stiffening process engendered by the extended finger. Before striking rest the mallet slightly on the ground, so that the ball and the

pointed mallet are in one and the same straight line, and strike the centre of the ball with the centre of the face of the mallet. When the ball is struck, you will instantly perceive whether you have struck it fairly or not. If it be struck evenly, *i.e.*, centre to centre, a certain amount of pleasurable thrill will pass through the whole of the body of the striker, such as when a cricket-ball strikes the right spot on a cricket bat. If otherwise, a slight, an almost imperceptible jar will pass up the handle of the mallet, and impart itself to the fingers holding the handle, while the ball struck will take a course which the striker did not intend. If you are aiming at a ball cast your eye from that at your feet to the object ball, and see before you make your stroke that the mallet, striker's ball, and the object ball, are all in one and the same straight line. Let it all be done easily, not dwelling too long upon the shot; but at the same time be careful not to hurry the stroke.

In going for hoops the stroke should be a short, sharp tap. This tap causes the striker's ball to leave the face of the mallet instantly. If the stroke is not made in this particular way an accident may occur, by catching the mallet head upon the striker's ball, and so diverting its course. Anyway there is always danger that the "following" stroke may send both balls out of the straight line. It is a disputed point with some good players whether the wrist-work or the shoulder stroke is the better. In cases where a long shot is necessary, the wrist will no doubt come

in ; but for steadiness and certainty I think the shoulder-stroke will be found to be the better. So much, however, depends upon the player himself, that such strokes may safely be left entirely to him, as I have always found that a man's mother-wit will generally guide him in cases of difficulty. Care should be taken by those in authority that the striker be not interrupted in his practices, especially when the player is about to strike. Nervous men are easily put off their strokes. In fact, almost the same caution ought to be used as in the case of the bowler's arm caution, or in listening for the click of the balls before entering a billiard-room. I remember being present, upon one occasion, when a most serious altercation arose in a public room because a gentleman, without thinking what he was doing, took out his white pocket handkerchief when a certain professional was playing the spot-stroke. The "terrier," as he was called, was only calmed after repeated apologies ; but it so unsettled him that he missed his next spot-hazard.

When the tyro has become thoroughly efficient in the lateral swing of the mallet, he should procure some diagrams of strokes, and thoroughly master them. A good exercise for a beginner is to try in how few strokes he can take a ball through the various hoops on the ground in a previously arranged course. The "Rush," "Cut" and the "Jump" may now invite his attention. The "Rush" was described to be the hard stroke which struck the object ball with sufficient force as to cause it to roll to some desired

spot. To make this stroke successfully the player's ball must be well between his feet; the mallet should then be grasped firmly, and the stroke made in a lateral direction from the shoulder. Suppose, for example, an opponent's ball is a few yards from the striker's hoop. If the striker can place his own ball behind it, and roquet it with sufficient force as to drive it near to the hoop, he will have achieved all that is necessary for the following croquet. Failure in this kind of stroke very often occurs from one of the following reasons: The striker's ball not being almost plumb perpendicular to the striker's eyes; the mallet not being held in the proper position; or in hitting on the ball instead of forcing it in a lateral direction. If the ground be at all hard or springy the ball will naturally, from the concussion, when hit above the centre, rise from the turf and proceed towards the object-ball in a succession of short jumps. When the object-ball is reached, if the striker's be travelling at speed it will most probably jump over the ball which it is expected to strike, and the stroke will be a failure. Remember always to strike at the centre of the ball for an even run. This may best be exemplified by what may be imagined to be a miniature Croquet-ground, namely, a billiard-table. Place the three balls on the baulk-line, so that they touch. Then with the finger draw the middle one back without moving the others, about 6 in. in the D., and in a straight line with the opening made. With a cue strike the displaced ball on the top in a straight line for the opening.

The ball will rise from the table, and **appear** to go through the space without touching the others, when **really** it jumps over it. The application of this is: The cue is the mallet—the middle ball is the striker's—and is struck above the centre, which causes it to jump. Now replace the three balls, and try the same stroke with a level cue, hitting the ball at the centre, or below it. It will be found that the stroke cannot be accomplished. It is the jump, or rise, that does it in the first place.

The Cut. This stroke is of great use at various stages of a game, and depends, as far as its accomplishment is concerned, upon the straightness of play of the striker. It is only a modification of the stroke just described (Rush) but instead of the ball being hit in the centre, it has to be hit upon the side by an extremely accurate stroke. If a ball has to be cut to the left, it must be struck upon the right side, and, if to the right, upon the left. Obviously, a greater amount of power must be put into the Cut than the Rush for a given distance. To become expert in this stroke, commence practice with the two balls close to each other and gradually increase the distance, until able to cut accurately.

The **Jump**, or **Leap**, is accomplished by striking the ball on the top very smartly. The effect is to make the ball struck rise from the ground and to leap over the obstacle in its path. To make the stroke successfully, the striker should take up a position slightly to the left of his ball, and

bring down the mallet sharply on the top of it. According to the force used, so will the height of the jump be. Only practice will enable the player to perform this feat in the proper way. The mallet should not touch the ground; but should expend its force upon the top of the ball. Upon favourable grounds a ball may be made to jump as high as $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft, but this can only be reached when the striker is a proficient, and where the hard ground favours him.

CROQUET STROKES.

Two ball strokes require a great deal of practice. The best method is to begin at short distances, and to gradually increase the space between. Take, for instance, a hoop, and describe a circle around it. Then place two balls so that they touch. Next endeavour to strike the balls so that one is left in position to go through the hoop, while the other should slowly roll to the other side, so as to be in position for the next stroke. The various terms used to denote the strokes in this section of the game, are as follows :

- 1 The fine take off
- 2 „ Drive
- 3 „ Split
- 4 „ Stop
- 5 „ Roll
- 6 „ Pass

By means of the above-tabled strokes a player is able to send the two balls to any two spots at his discretion in a forward line, or one can be so hit as to remain in position, while the other is dispatched in any direction. But as there is no rule without its exception, so it is impossible to strike a ball with a mallet to make it follow the line of the drawback stroke upon the billiard-table.

1, The fine take off. This is a stroke where two balls are touching, when the striker's ball, although it receives the whole force of the blow from the mallet and travels any distance required, yet scarcely moves the object-ball in

its passage. Good players become so expert at this stroke that they do no more than shake the croqueted ball, though theirs may travel nearly the whole length of the ground. This stroke resembles the "feather shot," or "quill-stroke," in billiards, where a player, from the baulk-line, could run into a corner pocket without doing more than shaking the object-ball placed upon the line. I have seen as many as 25 quill-strokes successively made by one of the old billiard-players. It is now, however, declared to be foul.

The object of the stroke in Croquet is to get position without moving the object-ball; but, at the same time, great care must be taken to move it, however slightly. A shake is all that is deemed necessary. Great care should be exercised to see that the two balls actually touch. It matters not from which side of the ball the player takes off—one, with practice, being just as easy as the other.

2, The Drive. The drive is a sharp, decisive stroke—the player's ball being hit fairly in the centre. The striker's ball should be placed behind, and immediately in a line with that to be croqueted, and they should travel in one and the same straight line.

3, The Split. It is usual in this stroke for the balls to travel when struck in different directions. When the balls are in the position for splitting, give a sharp, decisive stroke, and the two balls will travel nearly at right-angles to each other. The ball croqueted will travel in a line which may

be supposed to pass through the centre of both balls, while the striker's should pass in the direction which the player wishes.

And this latter part of the stroke appears to be the most difficult; but if the striker will remember to point the mallet, in striking, to the spot where his ball is to go, the ball will, as nearly as possible, take that direction.

4. The Stop. This stroke is accomplished by striking his own ball, either on the centre or below it. What is wanted is to give a motion to the striker's ball, in the contrary direction to which it is intended it shall go. This has the effect of retarding the ball, or causing it to stop.

5, The Roll. To effect this stroke both balls should travel an equal distance. This answers to the "following" shot in billiards, and, so to speak, the mallet must press upon the striker's ball immediately on the point of contact.

6, The Pass. This stroke is only another form of the roll, and can better be accomplished by the use of a mallet with an india-rubber face. Wrist-work is what is required, with a tight grasp with the right-hand and a loose one with the left.

Running Hoops. To run hoops, a sharp tap is the necessary stroke to gain the object. But as the object to be aimed at affords a smaller target than a ball, so great care is required in accomplishing the run. This is best explained by noticing the difference between the width of a billiard-pocket, and a cannon. Supposing that the pocket

is a fraction over 2in. in width, and that a billiard ball is 2in. to make a cannon, the striker's ball would have a wider path to travel over in making the cannon, than it would in making the pocket, for the reason that the width of the path at the pocket's farthest end is 2in. and a fraction; whereas, a cannon is 6in. wide, *i.e.*, the width of the striker's ball and of the two object balls. So in Croquet, the hoop (pocket) is 6in. wide, while the striker's and the object ball measure $7\frac{1}{4}$ in., and if the striker's ball travels correctly in the path, which is $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. at its remote end, the two balls must touch each other. So that the target is not so large as the ball, and if the ball be not accurately placed for the stroke, failure for the tyro may be the result. The stroke, also, will prove all the more difficult in championship matches, where the hoops are much smaller. Sometimes a hoop may be negotiated in the following manner: Aim at the inside of the further wire of the hoop it is intended to go through. Bring into use the "jump"-stroke, or "leap." The ball, if properly hit, and directed, will strike the inside of the wire, while the "following" motion will carry it through. This will be made more clear by referring to the side-stroke on a billiard table. Spin one of the balls, and allow it to run on to a cushion. It will run off sharply in the direction in which it rotates. Reverse the spin, and it will come off almost dead from the cushion.

STRENGTH.

ANOTHER important factor in the game of Croquet is strength, which is the power used in striking so as to place the balls in the best position for scoring, or for continuing to score. The estimation of strength when a hoop is to be run, or a peg to be hit, is of the greatest importance, and much more so now, since the Dead Boundary law has come into existence. Strength will be different according to different grounds, some being much faster than others, and to find this out will be one of the first things that an experienced player will endeavour to do. This can be done by a stroke or two, by aiming at a near peg, or by trying to run a distant hoop.

THE DEAD BOUNDARY.

IN the early part of this little work the changing from light to heavy mallets was spoken of. With the introduction of the heavy mallet, a decided improvement in the all-round play became manifest. As in the case of modern billiards, the "breaks," so to speak, became larger, so that the player who was "in," was in a decidedly better position for continuing than he would have been with a light mallet. The consequence was that the "in" player raced completely away from the player who was "out," leaving him only the long shots to console himself with and winning the game with ease. A consultation was therefore held, for it was seen that the game was likely to suffer as regards its popularity if nothing could be done to stop the rush of the "in" player. The hoops were therefore reduced in size and the settings made more difficult. The dead boundary law was also introduced, which enacted that when, in taking Croquet, if the striker's own ball, or the ball Croqueted, goes off the ground, the striker should lose the remainder of his turn. Thus the big breaks, or rather the attack, was weakened, while the defence was strengthened.

GENERALSHIP.

As the plan of studying strengths in the game of billiards has done much for the improvements connected with this fascinating pastime, so strength in Croquet has also done much to forward that game as a scientific amusement. The balls should be so "nursed" as to make a long succession of strokes possible for yourself, and at the end of the break they should be left where your opponent may find it difficult to score. The following cautions may be taken as of the utmost importance, and they should always be borne in mind by the young aspirant to honours in the game.

- 1, During a break endeavour to keep your own ball well under control for scoring.
- 2, Scatter those of the enemy.
- 3, Give close attention to "live" and "dead" balls.
- 4, Never peel a ball, *i.e.*, run it through a hoop with your own.
- 5, When a certain score is on, go for that score.

Finesse judiciously when you find that you are not certain of your shoot, and stop for your partner, in the hope that your opponent may miss. Finessing was the result of the introduction of the dead boundary, since which men have played to the boundary, out of the adversary's way, in the hope of a failure on his part to accomplish the object he had in view, *i.e.*, by going too far, and missing his turn, or not far enough, and missing the roquet.

In lying up for your partner's ball, it is advisable not to shoot too hard, but when this is not the case, then the boundary may be reached by additional strength.

Never lie up to your partner's ball unless it is on the boundary, and there is a chance of your opponent's breaking down.

In shooting be careful not to run into your adversary's game, but leave it in such a position that it may be of little use to him.

If there are two balls to go at, take the one that will give you the best position for a break ; but if the positions of the two are equal, go for the easier of the two.

By keeping the balls together we mean so much under control that, with ordinary care, they can be brought together for convenient scoring. The merest tyro must see that partners, by judiciously helping one another, and by doing what they can to hamper the opposite parties their own success is thereby assured. Therefore, think of your partner whenever you have the opportunity.

When your break is likely to, or has come to an end, send the dead ball to your partner, and play your own to your partner's hoop, or *vice versa*. It is one of the greatest mistakes to send the dead ball away. Keep it to be used to advantage in your partner's break, or your opponents will be able to turn the tables upon you.

Do not attempt too much, that is to say, when a certain score is on, do not play to the gallery by attempting some-

thing which may come off but which will leave you in difficulties in case of failure. Play the strict game, and make the certain score without bestowing a thought upon the other.

Make a break with the assistance of three balls when possible. This must be evident to all, for a player who has three balls to assist him in his progress towards game must obviously be able to do more with three than with one, which can only make the solitary point. Use the "dead ball," for with its assistance you can get others to swell your breaks. A very good opportunity for scooping the "dead ball" is when making the turning-peg.

When the period arrives, from the scattering of the balls, or from other reasons, and there is an evident probability that your break is about to terminate, then the next consideration on the part of the player should be, what to do to hinder the adversary from scoring. One of the best ways of accomplishing this coup is, to so place your balls that he is wired from them all. If it be not possible to do this altogether, then wire what you can, or send him away as far as possible, and at the same time do not leave the other balls so close together as to give him the chance of making a double shot. Double shots are easier than others, for if there be two balls to go at, the width of the path at the end of the stroke, where the striker's ball might hit any of the others, would be equal to six diameters of one ball. (See cannons and pocket—back note.) With

experienced players, however, a double-shot-tice is often left as a trap to induce the player to shoot, and in case of a miss to give the other a dead-ball.

In the various combinations which occur in the course of a game, it is sometimes desirable to play so that the chance of a break may fall to your partner. Not to do this would be selfish, therefore when signs are not wanting that your own break is about to end, endeavour to leave off with the balls in such a position that your partner may score, and continue his break. It is a matter of great importance, and one which only an experienced player can understand, when to discontinue your own break and let your partner in. This is what is usually known as passing the break, *i.e.*, leaving the balls in such a position that the partner may make a break when his turn comes to play.

The "In" Player. Just as the losing-hazard player in billiards strikes his ball with sufficient strength to bring the object ball back into a position to make a succession of hazards, so the experienced Croquet-player prepares for his next point by sending a ball forward to help him for the next stroke.

In nearly all cases it is advisable that no ball should be left behind while the break is proceeding.

When proceeding with your break be very careful that the balls do not get huddled together, or you will not have sufficient space to manœuvre, or to perform certain shots that will increase the score, or even to release yourself from

your restricted position. "Splitting" or "Stop" shots require plenty of space to bring them off effectually.

In going for a hoop, always do so with the "rush" stroke, instead of the long "roll." Do this even if you have to go out of your way to get the "rush."

Do not, as a rule, attempt to put your partner through his hoop, especially if they be small ones—as you may possibly overrun the hoop with your own ball, or get into such a position as will put an end to your own break.

The player should always bear in mind that when two balls are lying near together, any player may come down, and by roquetting one of them, get the "rush" to any part of the ground that he wishes to, as a help to his points.

The "Out" Player. Shooting is best done under the following circumstances:—

- 1, When the three other balls are at the boundary.
- 2, When the three other balls are in the middle of the ground.
- 3, Go for your partner when his ball is at the boundary.
- 4, When you have a good chance of hitting, or the chance of a double-shot.
- 5, Whenever you have a chance of going to the boundary, in the case of a miss, and the opponent is not likely to scoop your ball into his break.

THE FOUR-HANDED GAME.

As a game of scientific skill there is no doubt that the single game is much superior to the four-handed one. But where the tyro is concerned, much instruction can be conveyed in the double, especially if the partner be an adept at the game. There are various ways in which he can give his valuable assistance to the inferior player, *e g.*, by helping him out of his difficulties ; by working the balls so as to leave a break for him ; and by giving him general directions and advice as the game progresses. In this way young players derive much benefit, especially if the instruction be conveyed in a quiet, gentlemanly way, so as not to show up too plainly the defects of the inferior player. Everyone should remember that he himself was at one time a novice, and that the advice which he imparts to the tyro would have been very acceptable to him in the days of his noviciate. In the conduct of the game it is absolutely necessary to have someone in command—to whom implicit obedience is to be given by his partner, for nothing is so unpleasant to listen to as the constant arguing or wrangling of a man who does not know the game, when he has been advised by his friend, who probably has had a long experience in Croquet. The Captain has probably been chosen for the possession of those attributes which stamp a man for leadership, but even Captains are not immaculate, and therefore, he should bear in mind that he must not

give a too full measure of advice, or his partner will become nervous, and, finally, careless as to the result of the game. Games of partnerships are of various kinds, *e.g.*, four against two, sides against sides, etc. In preparing the way for a break for your partner, you should thoroughly understand his strong and weak points, as well as his peculiarities, and humour him to the best of your ability. When out of possession of the balls, great discrimination is necessary in either shooting, or finessing, and a good partner will always advise his second what to do in these particular cases.

BISQUES.

BISQUES are extra strokes, entitling players to another turn, and they may be taken at any time during the game.

Considerable controversy has at various times taken place with regard to the bisque, some players being of opinion that no number of them will equalise the score existing between the tyro and the expert, while others assert that handicappers cannot do wrong by allowing themselves a free hand, and by disbursing the bisques liberally. The first complaint appears to be made with some show of reason, especially when an exceedingly good player is pitted against a very inferior one. In cases such as these, the good players, when once they settle down to their breaks, probably go all round, and then leave their opponents in a disadvantageous position from which their knowledge of the game is not of such a nature as to enable them to extricate themselves from their difficulties. When such is the case, on the resumption of play by the giver of the bisques the opportunity is seized by him to finish the game. This may or may not be the case ; but if so, it merely shows that each player should, as much as possible, endeavour to keep to his own class of players, so as not to run the risk of being so unmercifully scored over. Take a parallel case. The professional billiard-players are so far in advance of the ordinary amateur, that from Roberts down to the third-raters, any number of points could be given with the hope of successfully pulling off the game

All that is necessary for one or the other in the professional ranks is a favourable opportunity for a break—then a masterly stroke is played, the balls are worked to the top of the table, and a big score is the result, while the inferior player stands by, probably a not over pleased spectator of the scene. An amusing instance of this kind once occurred to the writer of these notes. A second rate professional was conceding him 50 points in 250 up. By good play the receiver of points scored, by means of several good breaks, to 249, while his opponent stood at 150. The red ball was snugly tucked up, touching the cushion, so he ran a coup, as there was no chance of scoring. The professional from the cushion by the middle-pocket cut the red into the corner, and left himself in position for the spot-stroke. From this vantage-point he scored hazard after hazard, until the marker called “game.” Now apply this to Croquet. There are no doubt many undoubted runaway games ; but occasionally the inferior player has his turn, and when he does score a win, undoubtedly this is done by the aid of the bisque, at croquet, or by the aid of points, at billiards. The great rule to be observed is never to lose heart, but to be continually on the look-out for the chance that may come, and by a careful observation of the adversary’s play to gain a knowledge of how breaks are made and games won. As to the number of bisques to be allowed, ten has been deemed quite a sufficient number to very inferior players, on the supposition that if a player

cannot win with that number his skill as a Croquet-player is of such an order as to relegate him to the extreme end of the "nursery" of Croquet. His inferiority must be such that—both in his practices and in his knowledge of the game—his interests would be best served by commencing once more at the alphabet of Croquet. Naturally, a good player in the interests of his score will do his utmost to place the holder of the bisques in a disadvantageous position, and no blame can be attached to him for so doing. He may wire his opponent, so as to render the bisque of comparatively little value ; but this will not always be the case, and therefore it becomes important to know what to do when the opportunity presents itself for using a bisque for one's own advantage. Generally speaking, the bisque should be used for the purpose of making a break for the possessor of the advantage, and not for preventing the opponent from making a break. It follows then that the best time to take the advantage is when there is a possibility of making a break yourself, or when a break may easily be picked up, or in saving a break when you come down in the middle of one. To give a summary of the fore-going remarks—the best time to take advantage of the concession is as follows :—

1. To get an innings
2. To get out, when a break-down at a hoop occurs.
3. To obtain a break.
4. To keep in hand.

A bisque should be played for, that is, not a random shot, with the intention of taking the bisque in the case of a miss ; but it should be thought out beforehand, whether it be a good opportunity, and whether one ball be better than another to go to ; when the decision is arrived at, the stroke should be made very carefully so as to get as near to the ball aimed at as possible, in order that the bisque shot may be a certainty as regards coming off. By aiming carefully in the preliminary shot, and scoring a success, the bisque may be saved. This may be especially noted when the ball is on the boundary—try to hit, and save the bisque.

Naturally, the player to whom bisques are given will be found to be weak in bisque-play. The advice to be taken to heart by such a player, is for him to play as often as possible in partnership games, where he may obtain some really good advice on the arrangement and management of the side.

A player may be very well up in the theory of the game, but may be deficient in actual skill. It is to this player that the knowledge of the proper season for claiming the indulgence will become evident, and he will do so in such a way as to either impede his opponent or to forward his own game. Again, there are some players who do not shine as long-shots but yet have fair success in the way of making and continuing breaks. In their case, the bisque should be taken so as to get the possession of the balls.

When the opposite is the case—*i.e.*, when a player is good at shooting but an inferior hand at breaks—he should use his skill to forward his game when in possession of the balls. In fact, he should use his bisques to fill up the deficiencies of his play. A good deal of judgment is required to time the taking of a bisque. Some “bottle them up,” as some whist-players “bottle up” their trumps, while others will take them when of least advantage to themselves. As a general rule divide them, taking one half before turning the peg and the other afterwards, except when an opportunity occurs to take one to advantage. The player who is entitled to the bisque should always bear in mind that he can afford to play slowly at “centred” balls, and hard to those situated on the boundary, for should he miss, his bisque will come in.

Where a player is entitled to only one bisque, he should be very careful of it, and try to retain it as long as possible. He should “play up” to use a familiar phrase, and endeavour to hold his opponent upon even terms. A time will come when it will be evident to him that he should use his bisque—then let him do so.

Some experienced players will often tempt a tyro by leaving the balls in such a position that scoring seems easy. The possessor of the bisque must be upon his guard against this artifice, for it is only done to induce the tyro to take his bisque, so that for the rest of the issue the two players shall be upon even terms—the more experienced of the two

relying upon his own skill and nerve to outplay the other. To sum up the position of bisque play—those in receipt of them,

1. Not to throw them away thoughtlessly.
2. Not to hold them injudiciously.
3. Endeavour to find out the proper moment to use them.

A receiver of bisques should never take them, and then endeavour to under-rate the play of the giver by retaining them for the simple reason of bragging that he had won without using his bisques. Such a course might be altogether wrong, as well as untrue, for the simple reason that the giver might so alter the tactics of his play as to indulge in a more hazardous style of playing for the game.

HANDICAPS.

IN handicapping the great object is to bring the players together at the winning post, so that there should be as little difference in their scores as possible. In handicapping for Croquet games, it is always better to allow some competent person, whether player or not, to divide the party into a number of classes, and that those classes at the top of the list should give a certain number of bisques to those in the lowest classes. Thus class 1 to give 1 bisque to class 2, and 2 bisques to class 3, and so on.

In games of partnerships, where there are two players on each side instead of one, the numbers of the classes of two partners on each side are added together, and half the difference between the total numbers on each side will be the number of bisques to be given to the weaker party.

The Referee is the proper person to frame the handicap to be played.

PARTNER GAMES.

It becomes obvious to all who have played in the various combinations of various games, that the strategy of the single game will be altogether unsuitable for that of the double. At all events the system employed in the one will have to be considerably modified in the other. Players are not nearly so independent as regards the play; but have to consider very materially the tactics, not only of their opponents, but also that of their own partner. Thus dependence is naturally a great factor in a four game, and, for this reason, is voted by those who have become authorities in the game, where each has only himself to think of, and where dashing play is the principal feature, perhaps, as somewhat slow and tame. Still it must be acknowledged that a good game of four is not only a very interesting, but also a sociable one; while it gives an opportunity for displaying great generalship, as well as allowing scope for sterling individual play. In this respect it is quite different from billiards. In the latter game, the four combination is not at all a desirable one—in fact, it is almost the slowest game that is played. The waits in between are excessively tiring, while the length of the breaks may generally be counted on the ten fingers. I gather that the time that is spent in the depressing intervals between the strokes has such an effect upon the contestants that the interest in the game flows out, as did the courage of Bob Acres, at the finger ends. On the other

hand, in the four game of Croquet there is always something to keep the interest alive, the moving about, the summer air, the social converse, and above all, the pleasurable feeling that each partner is dependent on, and is helping the other. Then there is generally the glorious sunshine of the summer afternoon, the varied toilets of the spectators, the green of the turf, and the ever changing foliage of the surroundings, which, all combined, make as pretty a mixture as it is desirable to see.

But, as regards the play, when the skill of each is about equal, so that any player has not the disadvantage of requiring help from a senior hand, each party may be left to his or her own devices, as in the case of a single game. But still the player must not entirely forget that he has such a being as a co-mate in the struggle, and that should he break down in scoring, his partner will undoubtedly suffer for his indiscretion. In the case where one player is very much the superior of the other, on the same side, he must endeavour to keep within touch of him and not run away ; so as to leave him disconsolately unsupported. Neither must he be so selfish as to play his own game ; but he should use his efforts to advance the score of his lagging companion, and endeavour to place at his disposal an easy break or two. He will avoid the making of long breaks, and although his own skill may not stand out so prominently as it would in the single game, he will at least have the satisfaction of helping his partner, who would

most probably, were it not for his helping hand, lose heart, become anxious, play badly, without any consideration as to risks, and finally collapse altogether. But should the weaker partner, by some fortunate circumstance, be in front of the superior player at any period of the play, say for the same hoop, the latter can afford very material help to him by assisting him through his hoops, with greater facility. And if the better player should fall to the rear, it will generally happen in the progress of the game that a break will fall to his share, in the skilful employment of which he will speedily work his way alongside of his partner in the game. From the foregoing remarks it will be gathered that, while advancing his own interests, the superior player in a four-handed game should also do his utmost to advance the interests of the inferior one. In the case where the weaker player gets possession of the balls for the break, he should nurse them as well as he is able ; but at the same time he should play with the utmost caution, and try to leave the balls in such a favourable position that his partner may be able to put in his break. The progress towards the goal may be slow, but it will be certain, and if the weaker partner completes the round, then the more experienced player, with the break, comes up with a wet sail and scores the game. Although we advise the players to keep as much in touch as is possible, it may occur that their opponents have disregarded such tactics, and have become

detached, chiefly by the stronger of the twain making use of his big breaks, and so heading his partner. This is simply playing into the hands of the opposite side, for while the weaker of the two dallies in the rear, they cannot possibly win the game, and also the leader being so far away there is very little chance of obtaining assistance from him. Then the more scientific combination comes in and scores.

Very often it will happen that there exists a great disparity in play in partners on both sides. It is then often advisable to allow the opponents to have the first shot. If this be done, and the best man on the other side leads off, then the weaker player on the other side should follow. By so doing the stronger player on your side will take his turn before the best man on the other side. This will prove to be a great advantage, for your side will hold the key of the position, so that the weaker man of the other partnership will not possess the knowledge to take advantage of your mistakes, as the stronger player would.

In the case of partner games where the contestants are handicapped, the bisque can be taken advantage of by either player. It is a question, however, whether the stronger or the weaker one should make the most use of them, *i.e.*, whether the stronger man should take them to prepare a break for his partner, or whether the weaker man should make use of them for picking up, or for a saving break. It is a case where no stringent rule can be laid down; but circumstances, which alter the aspect of games

very materially, will, in some cases, solve the problem for the players.

It is very necessary that somebody on either side shall have the direction of the tactics of the game. It is usual, in all cases, to elect a Captain, and this officer is generally chosen for his skill in the manipulation of the balls, and for his general knowledge of the game. When occasions occur where the Captain deems a consultation necessary, let the conference be as short as possible, for too much advice to an inferior player will only serve to embarrass him, and cause him, perhaps, to become nervous, and to put him all abroad in his play. The Captain's duties will consist in finding out the good points of his partner, and also his shortcomings, and he will be careful not to let him attempt anything of which he is incapable, at the same time he will give him all the good advice that he possibly can. Some Captains are very skilful in this kind of leading on, and will bring a man forward by appearing to agree with him in most matters, and by adding a rider, which the weaker player will imagine is the offspring of his own brain. Not many Captains are able to do this, for it is a gift that is only given to a few.

Teaching too much becomes exceedingly tiresome to those taught, and only serves to confuse the novice. Let the advice be as short and as sweet as possible, so that the recipient may not be put off his play by a confusion of ideas imparted by counsel that lasts too long.

CROQUET PARTIES.

THESE are very enjoyable meetings, and supposing that your ground be large enough, your invitations should be sent out in good time for the day of play. Disappointments there will be : but, generally speaking, the number of those accepting will be pretty well defined. At all events, you will get a tolerably good idea of the number you may expect, and you will most probably be able to fill up the vacancies occurring in the list. According to the number of sets, so will the division of the ground have to be made. There should be sufficient space for one good game, and the remainder may be marked out into smaller grounds. Around the big ground, which will, of course, be the chief point of attraction, seats should be placed, so that non-players may sit and converse, or watch the progress of the games. The hoops upon the secondary grounds should, without being too large, be of such a width as to suit the moderate player. Those upon the principal ground may be smaller, for it is there that the best players will congregate. As with the old fashioned whist-tables, the early comers should have their choice of grounds. When a sufficient number have arrived, pick out the best players, and place them to do battle upon the best ground, and the set next in order of merit upon the second ground, and so on until all have their opportunities for playing. It may so happen that you will have one set more than you have accommoda-

tion for ; then in that case, two sets may play upon one of the secondary grounds, four commencing at one end, and four at the other. We spoke just now of choosing the best players who have arrived for the best ground. All the competitors should be classed according to merit, and this can be easily arranged if players are punctual. A competent person will be found upon the ground who is able to place the players in their proper class. If not, the host or hostess must do so, to the best of his or her ability. But someone can nearly always be found at Croquet meetings, someone who generally has "nothing else particular to do," and can place the contestants in their proper spheres. During the season of 1897 we witnessed many meetings along the Eastern Counties, where Croquet was booming well, and there we found that four or five individuals, always keen upon the game, were continually turning up for play — real enthusiasts in fact. Indeed, their faces became very familiar to us and exceedingly nice fellows they proved to be. Upon one occasion I happened to remark that Croquet was not so popular in that part of the country of which I was an inhabitant, and that frequently, at sales, I had picked up some bargains in the way of Croquet-sets. Before the meeting was over I found that I had made about six distinct promises to send Croquet-sets down. I am happy to say that I was able to carry out my obligations, and to forward the sets promised.

I also had the pleasure of using one of the sets, later in the Autumn, when I took my holiday in Norfolk, after a day's bream fishing upon the Yare.

Should the number of players exceed the anticipations of the host or hostess, a good plan is to play half-games, *i.e.*, from the starting to the turning-peg. These half-games are somewhat amusing, and as they are short and sharp, the whole company can be worked through, in a very short space of time.

By thus dividing the ground, all parties become satisfied : those who really play, do so to their satisfaction, while the others enjoy the fun of the short games to their fullest bent.

As side amusements the Croquet-target may be set up in another part of the grounds. This game is sometimes known as "Addition and Subtraction," and is made after the following plan. Eight hoops are placed in a row, side by side, while a peg is inserted in the middle of the row. The hoops are placed close together so that there is only one thickness of wire between each opening. Where meetings are frequent, a target made for the purpose is always kept at hand. From a distance of 15yds. for ladies, and 20 for gentlemen, competitors take their stand and shoot at the target. The number of shots allowed to each shooter is four. The score is kept as follows. Should the shooter hit the peg he counts 9 to his score, and if the ball goes through one of the hoops on either side of the peg, 7 is

added. The next hoop counts 5, and the third 3. The number allotted to the outermost hoop is 1. It happens as often as not that a wire is struck. Should the ball pass through the hoop after striking, the number is counted to the player ; but should it remain stationary after striking a wire then the intermediate number between those of the two hoops struck is added on ; *e.g.*, should the ball strike the wire between the hoops numbered 7 and 5, 6 is added on, and so forth ; but if the wire of the outside hoop be struck then nothing is added. It not infrequently happens that the target is missed altogether. In cases when this occurs, 5 is deducted from the score. Hence we get the title of the game, *viz.*, "Addition and Subtraction." By striking the peg upon each successive shot, 36 may be scored, while by missing the target altogether at each attempt, 20 may be deducted, or, should no previous score have been made, minus 20, will record the efforts of the unsuccessful shootist.

The pool for the prizes consists of a collection of sixpence or a shilling from each competitor. There are generally three prizes, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Another form of amusement is the **break-prize**. The player's ball is placed upon the starting-spot, and he himself selects the places where the other three balls shall be put. The competitor who makes the longest break wins. Then there is the handicap-break prize, in which each player receives as many bisques in his break as his

handicap class entitles him to receive from a first-class player.

The **taking off prize** is another source of amusement. This was invented by Cavendish, and is played in the following way. A ball is placed at each end of the ground within the boundary, and about 3ft. from it, and half-way between the peg and the hoop at the corner. The player places his own ball in contact with one of these, and has to take off to the other and roquet it. Should he succeed in doing this he takes off on the return shot, and so continues until he misses the boundary, or misses the roquet. He is then counted "out," and another competitor enters the arena. The balls must always be replaced when roqueted one yard from the point in the end boundary nearest to where the ball stops. One is counted for every roquet, and the player who makes the greatest number of roquets wins.

Through the kindness of Mr. Thomas Turner, of the Cassiobury Mills, Watford, we are enabled to place before our readers the rules of the game of Croquet, with a short history, etc., of the game.

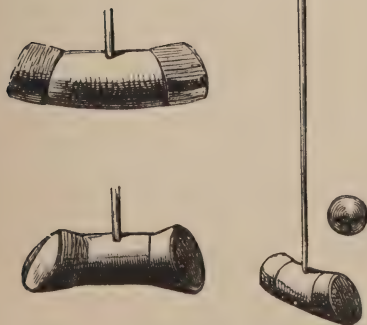
HISTORY OF THE GAME.

It has been stated by some writers, who lay claim to be authorities on the matter, that the game of Croquet is of very modern origin ; indeed, one writer on the subject goes so far as to assert that the game, as such, was "quietly introduced some four or five years ago." That the game was again re-introduced into England about that time we are free to admit, but that the game itself is a modern one we deny, and we have ample evidence to the contrary, for we find that, under another appellation, centuries ago, the game of the "Mallet and the Ball" gave the name to one of the most fashionable quarters of London, *viz.*, Pall Mall ; and such was, in fact, the name by which this game was then known in England, when Charles the Second was King.

Sir Robert Dallington, in his "Method for Travel," 1598, tells us that in his tour through France he found the game commonly played there ; and hence we infer it must have been very shortly afterwards introduced here, despite the "marvel" of the half-admiring and nationally egotistical baronet, who speaks of the game *there* as a gentlemanly sport, and yet, in the same sentence, "marvels" why among more *apish* and *foolish* toys which we have brought from France, this game was not among them.

It is probable that ladies had not, at this time, given their sanction to the use of the "mallet" ; had it been so, gallantry would have induced Sir Robert to have shortened his marvellous sentence, but here it is *verbatim* :

The mallet and Ball formerly used in the game of Pall Mall. From originals in the possession of the late Mr. Benjamin L. Vulliamy, and now in the British Museum. Length of the Mallet, 3ft. 8in.; diameter of the ball, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in,



Slender tapering oak handle, the upper part covered with white leather.

The ends cut obliquely, and hooped with iron.

"Among all the exercises of France I prefer none before the Paille-Maille, both because it is a gentleman-like sport, not violent, and yields good occasion and opportunity of discourse, as they walke from the one marke to the other. I marvel, among many more apish and foolish toys which we have brought out of France, that we have not brought this sport also into England."

In the year 1621, in a book entitled "The French Garden for English Ladies," we find the following mention of Pall Mall:

"A Paille-Maille is a wooden hammer set to the end of a long staffe to strike a boale with, at which game noblemen and gentlemen in France doe play much."

And again in "Blount's Glossographia," ed. 1670, as also from a paper contributed by Mr. Albert Way, to the "Archæological Journal," we not only find a confirmation of the introduction of the game into England about this time, but also accurate drawings of the implements used in the playing of it, *fac similes* of which are given below, which will be found to be almost identical with those now in use.

"Paille-Maille is a game wherein a round bowle is with a mallet struck through a high arch of iron (standing at either end of the alley), which he that can do with the fewest blows, or the number agreed on, wins. This game was heretofore used in a long alley near St. James's and vulgarly called Pell Mell."

We may fairly set it down as a fact that the game was introduced into England in the time of Charles II., the merry monarch having been some time in France, and having doubtless seen it played there. Be this as it may, *Waller on St. James's Park*, bears evidence to its antiquity, in the following lines:—

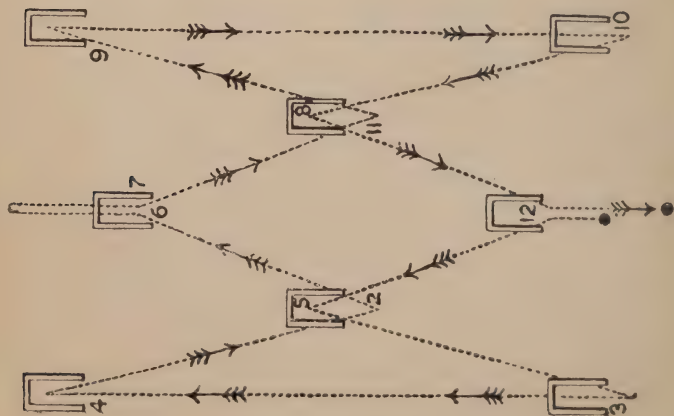
Here a well-polished Mall gives us the joy
To see our Prince his matchless force employ.
His manly posture and his graceful mien,
Vigour and youth in all his motions seen.
No sooner has he touched the flying ball,
But 'tis already more than half the Mall."

Pepys, in his diary, under date April 2nd, 1661, says: "Went to St. James's Park, where I saw the Duke of York playing at Pelemele, the first time that I ever saw the sport."

Albert Way, in a very interesting paper in the "Archæological Journal" on the subject of early Ball Games, from which we copy the illustration referring to the game of Pall-Mall, says: The precise time when ball play with a wooden mallet was designed, or whence it was introduced into England, has not been ascertained. The long handle and mallet was termed by the French, as also the game itself, *Palemaile*, and although it appears probable that the game may have been brought to this country from France, the very name suggests that its more remote origin may be possibly traced to Italy; the term *Palemaille* being in accordance with the Italian *Palamaglio*—from *Palla*, a ball, and *Maglio*, a mallet." Mention occurs of the *giucator di Palea a Maglio* in the Carnival songs of Florence about the year 1500, which is the first mention of the game that Mr. Way could find.

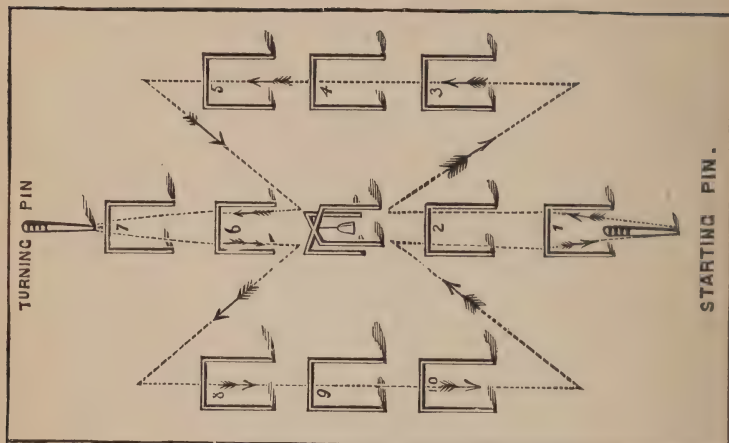
The name of the modern game is doubtless of French origin, but why it became changed from its original one, we are at a loss to explain. The French words, *croquer le marmot*, which words interpreted signify to *dance attendance* upon, have been suggested as the probable derivation of the name of this delightful and most social of all the sports. That there is plenty of dancing attendance anyone who has witnessed it, or who is acquainted with the game, will at once admit, seeing that all the participators in the recreation attend one upon the other, and that the very balls are made to follow the dancing example. The term, therefore, is not an inapplicable one.

DIAGRAM.

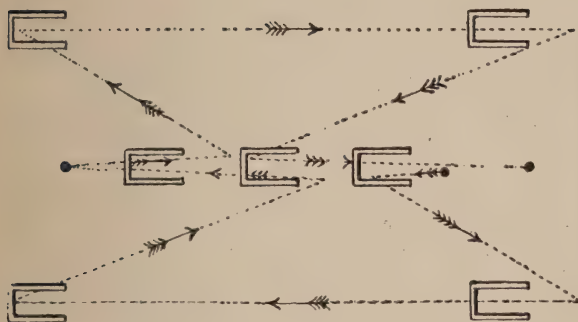


No. 1. EIGHT-HOOP SETTING. (See p. 58.)

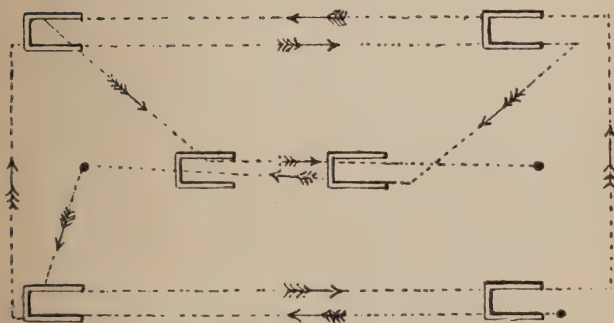
THE OLD SETTING.



STARTING PIN.



No. 2. SEVEN-HOOP SETTING.
(See p. 58.)



No. 3. SIX-HOOP SETTING.
(See p. 58.) Used in Public Tournaments.

No. 1. *Eight-hoop Setting*.—Distances on a full-size ground: Pegs 3 yards from boundary, first and sixth hoops 4 yards from pegs, middle hoops midway between first and sixth, and 4 yards from each other, corner hoops 5 yards from end of ground, and 4 yards from side. Starting spot opposite centre of same, and 2 feet in front.

No. 2. *Seven-hoop Setting*.—Distances on a full-sized ground: Pegs in centre line of ground 7 yards from nearest boundary, hoops up centre of ground 5 yards from peg, and $5\frac{1}{4}$ yards apart, corner hoops 7 yards from centre, and in a line with pegs. Starting spot, $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards from first hoop in centre line.

No. 3. *Six-hoop Setting*.—Distances on a full-sized ground as in No. 2, except that the middle-line hoops are 7 yards apart and 7 yards from peg. Starting spot opposite centre of left-hand corner hoop, and 1 foot from same. Corner hoops to be in line with pegs.

In match play it is desirable that spectators should not walk over the grounds, speak to players or umpires, or in any way interfere with the progress of the game.

RULES AND LAWS OF THE GAME

1.—There shall be no restriction as to the number, weight, size, shape or materials of the mallets, nor as to the attitude or position of the striker, but the mace stroke may not be used nor the ball struck with the handle.

2.—The players shall toss for choice of lead and of balls, and in a succession of games shall take the lead alternately, and keep the same balls.

3.—In commencing, each ball shall be placed at the starting point shown on the diagrams, and a ball having been struck, is at once in play, and may roquet another or be roqueted, whether it shall have made the first hoop or not.

4.—A stroke is considered to have been taken if a ball is moved perceptibly; but should the player have struck it accidentally the ball must be replaced and the stroke taken again.

5.—If a player makes a foul stroke he loses his turn and all points made therein, and the balls are replaced or remain where they lie, at the option of the adversary. The following are considered foul strokes:

(a) To strike with the mallet another ball instead of or besides one's own in making the stroke. (b) To spoon, that is to push a ball without an audible knock. (c) To strike a ball twice in the same stroke. (d) To stop or divert the course of a ball when rolling. (e) To allow a ball to touch the mallet in rebounding from a wire or peg. (f) If a player, in striking at a ball which lies against a peg or wire, should move it from its position by striking a peg or wire. (g) To omit taking croquet after roquet.

If, after a croquet, the striker's ball while rolling be touched by the striker or his partner, the stroke is foul.

6.—A player continues to play so long as he makes a point or hits a ball. A point consists in making a hoop or hitting the turning peg in order.

7.—A ball has made its hoop when having passed through from the playing side and ceased to roll, so that it cannot be touched by a straight-edge placed across the wires on the side from which it was played. If a ball be driven partly through its hoop from the non-playing side, and remain so that a straight-edge placed in contact with the hoop on the non-playing side touches the ball, the ball cannot run its hoop at its next stroke.

8.—A player who hits a ball must take croquet; that is, must strike his own ball while in contact with the other, so as perceptibly to stir both. In doing this he is not allowed to place his foot on his ball. A player, when his turn comes round, may hit and croquet each ball in succession, and can do this again after each point made, but between the points can only take croquet once off each ball. If in taking croquet the striker's ball go off the ground the striker loses the remainder of his turn; but if by the same stroke the striker makes a point or a croquet he continues his turn.

9.—A playing ball which hits another after making a point is in hand, and the striker can score no point till he has taken croquet. After hitting another, a ball may be stopped by any player, but should it, in rolling, displace any of the other balls, such balls must remain where they are driven.

10.—When, at the commencement of a turn, two balls are found touching, croquet must be taken at once, without repeating the hit.

11.—When a player, in his stroke, hits one or more balls, he must take croquet off the ball that is struck first, but if he has hit two simultaneously he may choose from which of them he will take it, and in both cases a second hit is required before he can take it from the other ball.

12.—Should the ball in making its hoop strike another that lies beyond the hoop and then pass through it, the hoop and the hit

both count, but should any part of the ball that is hit have been lying beneath the hoop the croquet must be taken, but the hoop does not count.

13.—A rover which strikes, or is driven by, another ball against the winning-peg is out of the game, but must be removed from the ground.

14.—A player who pegs out a rover by a first hit cannot take croquet from it, as the ball is out of the game, but he is entitled to another stroke.

15.—Should a player play out of his turn, or with a wrong ball and this be discovered by his antagonist before a second stroke in error has been made, the turn is lost, and all points made after the mistake was discovered, or the ball must be replaced to the satisfaction of the antagonist. But if he has made a second stroke before the error is discovered, he continues his break, and the next player follows with the ball that is next in rotation to the one with which he has played; and he is liable to lose his turn, and all points made therein, if he plays with that which would have been the right ball if no mistake had been made.

16.—Should a player make the wrong hoop by mistake, or croquet a ball that he is not entitled to croquet, and the mistake be discovered before he has made a second stroke, he loses his turn, and any point so made in error, but if he has made a second stroke before the discovery, he shall be allowed to continue his break.

17.—In order to prevent the occurrence of the errors noticed in the above rules (Nos. 15 and 16) a player is bound, upon being appealed to, to declare truly what is his next hoop or point in order, and is entitled to demand of his antagonist what he has played last, and to insist upon his clips being properly placed.

18.—When clips are used they should be moved by the Umpire

or with his cognizance, at the end of each turn, and their position shall be conclusive as to the position of the balls in the game.

19.—Should a ball in play be accidentally stopped by the Umpire he places it where he considers that it would have rolled to. Should it be stopped by a player it will rest with the side opposed, to that player to say whether the ball shall remain where it stopped, or be placed by the Umpire, or the stroke be taken again.

20.—If a ball lies within a mallet's length of the boundary, and is not the playing ball, it must at once be put out three feet at right angles from the boundary, but if it is the playing ball it may, at the discretion of the player, either be put out or played from where it lies.

21.—If it is found that the height of the boundary interferences with the stroke, the player may, at the Umpire's discretion, bring out the balls so far as to allow of the free swing of the mallet, and in taking a croquet both the balls.

22.—Should a player, in trying to make his hoop, knock a wire out of the ground with his ball or mallet, the stroke shall be taken again.

23.—Any player may set upright a peg or hoop except the one next in order, which, however loose, awry, or slanting it may be, must not be altered, except by the Umpire.

24.—No ball may be moved because of its lying in a hole or on bad ground, except by the Umpire, or with his permission.

25.—Where there is no Umpire present, permission to move a ball, or to set up a hoop or peg or other indulgence, for which an Umpire would have been appealed to, must be asked of the other side.

26.—The decision of the Umpire shall in all cases be final. His duties are: (a) To move the clips, or see that they are properly moved; (b) to decide on the application of the laws; (c) to satisfy any player as to the point that is next to be made, or the right ball to play; (d) to keep the score. But he shall not give his opinion, or notice any error that may be made, unless appealed to by one of the players.

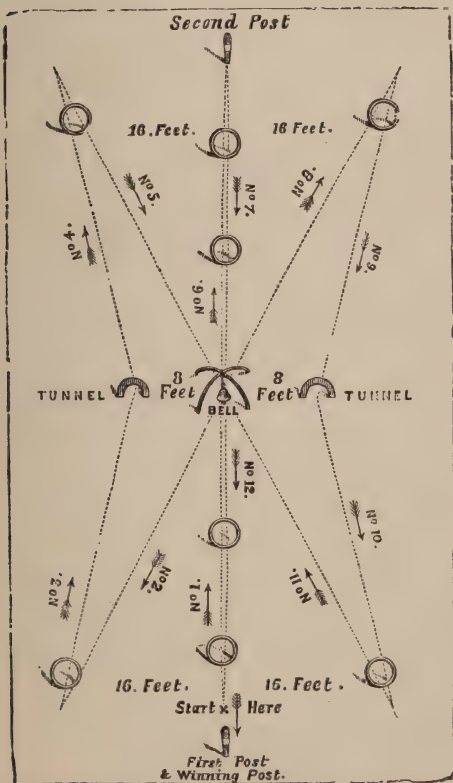


Diagram of the
EGLINGTON CASTLE CROQUET.

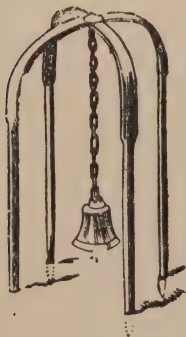
THE EGLINTON CASTLE GAME OF CROQUET.

The following are the DIRECTIONS for playing the EGLINTON CASTLE GAME, which we preface by an explanatory diagram :—

First, place the ball 4 feet in advance of the first post (see * near the bottom of the cut in page 63), and play through two hoops to the bell in centre; then to hoop at left-hand corner, going beyond it to come through returning; then through the tunnel near the bell, and the hoop at the lower left-hand corner, following the dotted line; then back to bell, and down to the two hoops to second post; back through hoops to bell and through the other lower hoops, going beyond the same on right hand side; then through tunnel near bell and through upper hoop on right hand side, back to bell; then up through the two hoops to first post and win.

Each time a player comes to the bell it must be rung.

The rules of Croqueting, etc., etc., are the same as in the ordinary game.



MAY 18 1920

